

EVANGELICAL INQUIRER.

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"There is one body, and one Spirit, as also ye are called in one hope of your calling: One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and with all, and in" all Christians.—PAUL the Apostle—McKnight's translation.

Extract from a private letter addressed to the Editor, dated Wilmington, June 16th, 1830.

DEAR BROTHER,—The Doctor having been so constant a correspondent, it has apparently been unnecessary for me to undertake to enter into detail upon the various subjects theological, which, I presume, has been the principal theme of his communications. I shall therefore be the more brief upon that subject, and hasten to the more immediate object of this letter.

We are still progressing in the great cause of the reformation, with a rapidity, and power of success, that clearly indicates that the arm of flesh has no affinity with the powerful conquests of the *sword of the Spirit*. The impetus given to it by the Great King through your instrumentality, in the infancy of reform in this place, is increasing with a success that has hitherto surpassed the expectations of its most devoted advocates. On the first day of this week (when the disciples met together to break bread,) we had five candidates for immersion: and six who had been immersed by other societies, came forward and were received into the Church upon a declaration of their faith in the Head of the Church, and a public avowal of an intention on their part to reform, and on first day next we expect several more candidates for immersion, say four or five. We have for several weeks past immersed less or more; I am told our number is now between forty and fifty. A similar success attends the gospel in the neighborhood of this place. A church has been organized on Cowan's creek, by brother Rains, to

whose labor among us we are greatly indebted. How long we are to be thus favored, is known only to the Great King and Head of the Church. Much every way no doubt depends upon the humility, devotion and faithfulness of the disciples.

It gives us great pleasure to hear that your Church is enjoying a similar blessing, and that your light is not shining in vain into the dark regions of sectarian gloom—that the simple Gospel is exhibited by your Church three times every first day of the week—first by the word—secondly by breaking bread, and lastly by baptism. Before such exhibitions, the Monkish traditions of the day can no more stand, than Dagon before the ark. May the Lord give success to the laws of the Kingdom, and all those who sincerely obey them.

CREEDS AND CONFESSIONS OF FAITH, NO. II.

There are many objections urged against letting the Churches be governed by the scriptures alone, that, to the uninformed and unwary, but especially to the interested sectarians, appear plausible, and even insurmountable. To these severally, we must pay attention in due time. Among them the following presents the principal difficulty to those, who, by inheritance, chance or choice, are burdened with modern systems. Every individual, say they, must have his creed, as creeds are nothing but expressions of opinions. In pursuance of this plan, every one that thinks holds, and he that utters his thoughts, publishes a creed. In a word, there is no thinking without a mental, no speaking without a verbal, and no writing without a written creed. Now I object to this kind of logic. If this be the meaning of the word creed, we all certainly have confessions in abundance. To exhibit and illustrate the idea I attach to the word, we will suppose a case of common occurrence, in which the character and effects of this piece of Anti-Christian furniture are seen without the help of magnifying glasses.

Suppose then, that in a thickly populated country all the principal denominations resided together. Suppose further, that, in the centre of a given district of this country, say thirty miles square, there resided a sinner who had rendered himself notorious for his rejection of the scriptures, and his slight opinion of, and contemptuous speeches against, Christianity—that this sinner was led to examine the Divine system—that its evidences, the concurrent testimonies of the Holy Spirit found in the miracles and verbal and written communications of Prophets and Apostles with the wonders wrought by, and exhibited in and around the person of Messiah, fastened the conviction upon his soul, that the one whom he esteemed an impostor, was in reality God's anointed Saviour. But now to the point. This sinner honestly acted in accordance with his convictions, and wished to become a loyal subject of Jesus and regularly naturalized in his Kingdom. Of his sincerity and the genuineness of his reformation, no one had any doubt. All denominations are pleased with him, and each wishes to embrace him in its communion. But lo! he hesitates. They press, but he is retiring. Upon an explanation of the whole matter, he expresses himself in the following manner. I wish to be among the disciples, and be myself a disciple, but there is one difficulty which appears insurmountable. I love this sect, but its peculiar *opinions* are the test of membership; or in other words, I must profess faith in, or acquiescence to, their *Creed*. Now I have several objections to this mode of proceeding. First, for me to profess faith in, or submission to the creed, would be hypocrisy, for I am too young in the profession to know whether it contains the sense of the oracles; I do not wish to be a hypocrite. 2dly—by so doing I would throw away the honored name of the Apostles and early christians—*disciple*, and rather lay claim to that of Judge, or Doctor of Divinity, for I would be *declaring* what the scriptures teach, instead of *learning* what they inculcate. 3dly—I should be afraid

that the confession of faith would have an undue influence upon my judgment, and give an one-sided tendency to my researches. 4thly—If the creed contains less than the scriptures, it says too little, if more than the scriptures, it contains too much. Plainer than the good book it cannot be, and if not so plain, it is made up of words without knowledge. 5thly—On the supposition, that I acknowledged the sentiments of the creed now, as I grow in knowledge, my opinions may change, and then I would be liable to the censure of the church. 6thly—I am unwilling to submit to human uninspired dictation in religion. I owe allegiance to no King save Jesus, and shall sustain no government but his. I love you, and if you will receive me as a brother, and no efforts are made to control my conscience, I will live and die with you. But subscribe your creed I cannot.

Now what will be done in this case? *If the church reject him, the peculiar opinions which he refused to subscribe, are the test by which he suffers banishment from the Kingdom of Christ, and is the creed.* This is my definition. Now mind ye, in this case there is nothing but the opinions of the candidate called in question; his moral and religious character stand unimpeachable, and even his opinions have not been challenged—he only refuses submission to the dictation of others in matters appertaining to his conscience.

Opinions, all must and all will have, and for liberty of opinion, all christians should contend. But who, that reflects at all, does not see the difference between the exercise and liberty of opinion, and the domination of a creed? Yet, *mirabile dictu*, the existence of opinion has been supposed necessarily to imply the existence of a creed. How delusory are the reasoning of many! As long as I use no other means to disciple others to my notions, than persuasion and argument, they are more or

less harmless, but as soon as I attach any penalty to the rejection of them, such as exclusion from the kingdom of Christ, etc. I lord it over the conscience, and deserve to be punished as an usurper. Expressed opinions only are creeds, when they become penal laws.

If, in the case above alluded to, the church should receive the candidate, (who would, in the sectarian group, be called a speckled bird,) there would be a giving up of the point at issue. Their creed is dead and buried, and to defend it is useless, and the wordy war about its utility is all sham fight. If it is said that it only is an expression of the sentiments of the congregation, it may with propriety be asked how the society could receive the above mentioned candidate who disagreed with them. None of the popular creeds in christendom express the sentiments of their respective sects, the Westminster confession, the mother of all modern creeds, not excepted. If required I can make good this assertion.

In this argument we will acknowledge that often, especially in times of excitement, many join the church without reference being made to the creed, and this course is defended by saying that such a reference would stop the excitement. But it is known at the same time, that the creed, after they are unwarily caught, is made the text book of their instruction, and if they refuse their new lessons, they are treated with coldness and contempt, and if party spirit runs high, are finally excommunicated as unfit for an inheritance among the sectarianized. This is what I would call *catching with guile*. Lo! what a harmless thing was the creed when they went into the church, but the bull of a Pope was not more terrific when they went out of it! It becomes Christians to be very jealous of any such an instrument. So much for our supposed case and its adjuncts. Of the other objections to Christian liberty, more will be forthcoming.—EDITOR.

THE CREDIBILITY OF THE MOSAIC HISTORY.—No. II.

2. To these considerations we may add, that there are various evidences of the correctness of scripture chronology.

As there exists no evidence of a higher antiquity, so neither is it possible to fix the creation of the world, and the origin of the human race, in a much later period. The history and chronology of the Bible are liable to no charge of inconsistency. The facts considered in detail, or in the aggregate, want none of the genuine characters of true and impartial history. When we come to consider the sources whence the knowledge of ancient history is drawn, we shall see, that they uniformly increase the authority, by corroborating the facts of the sacred history.

That matter was coeval with, and independent of God, is more difficult to reconcile to the dictates of reason, or to the phenomena of nature, than the doctrine of creation and providence, as laid down in the books of Moses. If it be most easy and rational to believe what is most evident, and if wisdom and goodness are displayed in the works of nature, and throughout all the visible creation, then to abstain from believing, will be to follow the weaker instead of the stronger reason: those therefore who reject the latter and embrace the former scheme, are more worthy of the charge of credulity than those on whom they bestow it.

Neither Cicero nor Plato had any knowledge of antiquity, inconsistent with Moses' account of the creation; indeed, as we extend our inquiries back into ancient ages, we evidently see all the rays of light converging to one point—beyond which, little is conjectured—nothing is evident.

The deluge, commonly called Noah's flood, may be considered as the most prominent feature of the first book of Moses. This article of the Bible history is made both the subject of cavil and ridicule by unbelievers, as a thing incredible and absurd. This they

commonly do upon the ground of its being a mere matter of revelation! The evidences on which its credibility rests, are by no means so generally known as the importance of the thing seems to demand.

We shall briefly state the evidences in proof of the truth of this article.

1st. Were it regarded merely as a matter of revelation, as the objection imports, still it challenges belief. As such it must be considered as part of a system of truth, which in the sum, and all its parts, is infallible. The history written by Moses contains nothing but what might be looked for in the dictates of a Being of infinite wisdom. His laws can in no instance be taxed with injustice, nor his assertions with falsehood.

The character which Moses ascribes to God, as far transcends any thing found in the heathen writers, as the God of the universe is more glorious than an idol. Among the things written by Moses, the character of God, the origin of the universe, the perfect standard of morality, the maxims of civil policy, and the excellent code of laws, were all far beyond the reach of human wisdom.

This remark is so certainly true, that among all the productions of mortal men since his time, none have come within an infinite distance of him, but such as have copied from his originals, or drawn from the same fountain of inspiration.

Why then should we disbelieve his history? It states things, which, if they cannot in every instance be proved, can in no instance be disproved: facts, which the whole current of universal testimony corroborates. Hence, if the certainty of the deluge rested wholly on the authority of revelation, it would need no better support. So far is that from being the case, that in fact, no event is more strongly attested or sustained by the belief of all the ancient nations, as we shall presently state.

2. The geography of the earth affords several

strong proofs of an universal deluge. The productions of the sea are found in the most inland parts, not only on the earth's surface, but even deep in its bowels; and not only in valleys and plains, but in hills and mountains. These productions are found in such quantities, as not to be accounted for by any slight or partial cause, and in such a state as denotes them to have been deposited there for many ages.

Had there ever been such a deluge as Moses describes, such appearances as are now observed must have followed. Marine productions must have been washed up on the land, and in many places mingled with it. In one eminent instance then, it must be allowed that the phenomena of nature confirm the truth of Moses' history, and that too in an article thought by some the most doubtful. We need inquire for but one cause for one effect, and certainly the universal diffusion of marine productions, can only be accounted for, by supposing that the ocean once covered the earth.

The configuration of the surface of the earth; the positions of hills, mountains, valleys and plains, seem to denote some ancient war of elements; they are, generally speaking, so situated and fashioned, as might be expected from the whirlpools, currents, and eddies of the retiring flood, and can only be accounted for as effects of the deluge.

3. The belief of all the ancient nations; and the testimonies of many writers of antiquity, confirm Moses' account of the deluge, and shew; that no article of ancient history is better supported. We shall here state a few authorities on this subject.

1. The first authority, among the heathen writers, is that of Berosus the Chaldean. From his testimony we may learn the opinion of the Chaldeans respecting the flood. If we change the name of Noah for that of Xisuthrus, it will appear that Berosus has the whole history of the deluge complete. Berosus says, "that very anciently the gods being greatly offend

ded at the wickedness of the human race, foretold to Xisuthrus that they intended to destroy the world by a deluge. Xisuthrus immediately set about building a ship of very great dimensions. After many years, a prodigious vessel was constructed, and Xisuthrus with his family entered into it, with a multitude of creatures which were to be preserved."

"The flood then came: the face of the whole earth was covered, and the vessel which carried the only surviving family of the human race, was buoyed up, and floated on the boundless deluge. The waters at length abated, and the ship chanced to land on a mountain in Armenia, called Ararat." The same author says, that nigh to his own times, "large pieces of timber were still seen on those mountains, universally supposed to be pieces of the ship of Xisuthrus."

Many other Chaldean writers mention the same things: so that the belief of the Chaldeans in the deluge, rests on the most unquestionable authorities. Moreover, the certainty that they did believe in it, is a consideration of great weight, for Nimrod founded their empire but a short time after the deluge; and they, of all the ancient nations, were the most likely to have correct information, as far as depended on tradition.

2. The second authority we shall mention, is Ovid, a writer of the Augustan age: he relates the story, though with different names, much in the same way: He says, that "the gods, to punish the wickedness of man, destroyed the earth with a deluge. The destruction was so complete, that only Deucalion and Pyrrha escaped to the top of mount Parnassus."

3. Varro, the most learned man the Roman state produced, is full to our purpose. Varro says, that "in ancient times there was an universal deluge, in which the human race were nearly all destroyed." He says the flood took place 1600 years before the first Olympiad. Now it is known the first Olympiad took place 771 years before Christ. This account admirably cor-

responds with the scripture chronology; for 1600 added to 771, makes 2371, whereas the Mosaic chronology places the flood 2348 years before Christ, a difference of only 23 years in a range of time so long. When we consider the erudition of Varro, and that his chronology was drawn from the Greeks and Egyptians, and came through a different channel from that of the scripture, we may well be astonished at this coincidence, and can have no rational doubt of the correctness of the facts in question.

4. Seneca, the celebrated Roman philosopher and historian, is very particular on the subject of the deluge. He not only says the same things as the above cited authors, but goes much further into the subject, assigning what were the probable causes of the flood. He moreover says, that as the world has once been destroyed by water, so it shall again be destroyed by fire, and like a philosopher proceeds to account for the possibility, and even probability, of such an event.

5. Few men were more extensively read; or deeply learned in history, than Josephus, the Jewish historian. He affirms that we read of the deluge and the ark in the writings of all the barbarian historians; and that all the eastern nations were uniform in their belief of that article of the Mosaic history.

6. Vossius says that a tradition prevails among the Chinese, that Puoncuus with his family escaped from the universal deluge, and was the restorer of the human race. The same is also stated by father Martinius, the Jesuit, who was a resident in China, and who says, that all the ancient writers of the Chinese history, speak largely of the flood. Even among the Indians of North and South America, many traditions of a general deluge are said to prevail.

7. We shall close this enumeration of authors, with the great and respectable names of Strabo, Plato and Plutarch, each of whom expresses his belief in a general deluge. Plutarch, particularly, says, that Deucalion, when the waters of the flood were abating, sent

forth a dove, which returned with an olive leaf in her mouth. It may indeed be said that he copied this from the history of Moses; in reply to which, we only need answer, if so, then he doubtless gave credit to that history.

Many more testimonies might be adduced on this subject, but from those already stated, those who are disposed to tax the history of Moses in this article with falsehood or absurdity, may see something of the nature of the controversy in which they are engaged.

It is thought by many, that the heathen mythology deciphered, is but the history of Noah and his sons, and the original dispersion of their families. Saturn, whom mythology declares to be the father of gods and men, they say, was Noah; and Jupiter, the son of Saturn, was Ham, the son of Noah. Plato affirmed that Saturn was the son of Oceanus and Thetis.

A bold and lively fancy would not scruple to say that Noah was born of the sea, or of the flood. Thetis was the ocean, and Oceanus the god supposed to preside over it. As Noah passed over the deluge from the old world to the new, nothing could be more natural in those simple and pastoral ages which followed, than for orators, poets and fabulists first, and at length for all others, to celebrate him as sprung from the sea; yea, to promote him at length into a god, and to adore him as the father of gods and men.

When Babylon was taken by Alexander the Great, his philosopher, Calisthenes, found in the tower of Babel, astronomical observations for 1903 years preceding; i. e. from its supposed building. The Chaldeans were astronomers at a very early date, and their view in rearing that very high tower, among other things, might have been to provide a convenient observatory. Alexander took Babylon about 333 years before Christ; which would make the building of Babel 2236 years before Christ. The Mosaic history places the flood 2348 years before the christian era; consequently Ba-

bel must have been begun within a little more than a century from the flood.

Three famous ancient authors, viz. Plato, Herodotus, and Diodorus Siculus, each of whom visited Egypt, fix the date of the heroic age, and what they call the wars of the great gods, at different eras, but not far from the same time. Plato fixes the date of these wars in the time of Cecrops. The "Antiquities of Greece" state, that Cecrops founded the commonwealth of Athens 1450 years before Christ, or 253 years before the Trojan war. Herodotus and Diodorus fix those wars a little earlier. Between the days of Cecrops and the flood were 898 years. In this time the Mosaic history comes down to the conquest of Canaan: and in this time took place all those transactions between gods and giants, so famous in mythology. From this statement we deduce two considerations of importance:

1. Neither the traditions nor histories of the Greeks and Egyptians claim a higher antiquity than the Mosaic history—and,

2. As far as their traditions can be traced from facts, or their allegories resolved, they go rather to corroborate, than weaken the authority of that history. In this period, Menes, or Misraim, laid the foundation of the ancient kingdom of Egypt, which, it is said, the Copts and Arabs still call the land of Mesr, or Misraim. In the same period, Nimrod founded the kingdom of Babylon—Elam, the son of Shem, founded the Persian, and Ashur the Assyrian empires. Joktan, the great grandson of Arphaxad, settled in Africa; and the sons of Japhet settled in Italy, Germany, Scythia, and the east. Those who have leisure and inclination to read, may see this subject treated at large in Bedford's Chronology.

Whelpley.

From the Christian Intelligencer.

LIFE AND IMMORTALITY.

The intelligence which is communicated through the gospel, is incomparably glorious. It is not only good

NEWS OF GLAD TIDINGS, but it imparts to the believers fulness of joy. The Gospel reveals news of a peculiar description. Much intelligence may be communicated that is new, good and joyful, and yet, fall infinitely short of being the gospel of the Son of God. That intelligence, which by way of distinction, is denominated GOOD NEWS OF GREAT JOY, has relation to one point, in the great system of revelation, which ought to be fully understood. It is the annunciation of one great and infinitely interesting TRUTH, immediately connected with which, are a variety of circumstances, depending on it, for their relative use and importance. It is the grand centre to which they all converge; the focus where they meet and harmonize, reflecting on a world, the light and radiance of Heaven. *The declaration of life and immortality is the TRUTH to which we allude.* It is the doctrine of the Son of God, the Saviour of men, announcing the certainty of future, conscious, blissful and continued existence, beyond the grave. This we declare to be intelligence, incomparable and glorious, and never safely asserted, but in connexion with the *mediation of the Redeemer of sinners.* Jesus is the only name under heaven, through whom this marvellous truth can be proclaimed. Deists may boast of the individual possession of an immortal principle, which bids defiance to dissolution, but it is no less useful than humiliating to consider that the acknowledgment of that would by no means evince the doctrine of individual, happy and perpetual existence. According to that hypothesis, the immortal principle existed in eternity, *before time with us*, without personal consciousness; and it may also exist to eternity, after we leave the world, in the same unconscious situation. As the body returns to the earth, and is, as it was, before its organization, so the spirit may return to God and remain forever without personal existence. Being an emanation from the eternal source of life, it may again mingle in the boundless splendor of immortality, or, like a particle of water from an immeasurable

fountain, be again received to its capacious bosom, and lost in the ocean from which it was exhaled. From this mode of reasoning we arrive at no fairer conclusions, that we shall possess a susceptibility for happiness and glory in futurity, than that we were thus susceptible in all past eternity. The evidence goes too far, and therefore, gives no support to the hypothesis.

From the volume of nature no adequate evidence can be adduced, to produce conviction in the doctrine of life and immortality.

The history of man conducts us all finally to the same house, and leaves a world to slumber, in the regions of the dead, forever. One generation after another arises in regular succession, crowding the next former off the stage, as though anxious to exhibit their part in the strange and changeful drama of life. Not a solitary individual re-enters the world's theatre. All alike take their exit, and are unknown beneath the sun forever. Go to yonder grave-yard, where mortals slumber in the arms of death, and learn the only language of the tomb, the epitaph declaration that they *once lived*. Lettered stones and monuments are more instructive than the once living thousands whose memory they preserve from oblivion. All beside them are speechless as the chambers of eternal silence. No lingering spirits hover around their mouldering relics, whispering the intelligence of their present existence. Speechless is the gentle breeze that fans the verdant covering of the departed hero, philosopher, astronomer, theologian. The country for which they seem to embark, returns us no intelligence of their safe arrival. By the light of nature we follow them to the verge of time, and standing on the shore of a vast ocean, with exquisite anxiety, we gaze until the last dreadful struggle is over, and we see them sink in the fathomless abyss. We feel our own feet sliding from the precarious bank on which we stand, and but a few suns more, and we shall be whelmed midst death's awful waves.

The empire of the destroying angel is universal, including all nations, kindreds and tongues of the earth. He wields its bloody sceptre from north to south, from east to west, and at his command, nobles, princes, and monarchs bow to the dust. Statesmen, whose fame has been wasted to the four quarters of the wide world; orators, that have united the language of earth and heaven; conquerors, decked with proud laurels plucked from the fields of war; and all the dread tyrants whose flinty compassions could never melt, while an individual remained unloaded with the iron chains of despotism, alike submit to the dominion of death; and in the sleep of the tomb, exhibit the emblem of perfect equality, with the unnumbered multitude, whose *interests, feelings, liberties and lives* had been but toys and baubles in their hands. Cold are the lips, motionless the tongues, withered are the laurels and nerveless the arms, in the domain of death. Universal, irreparable and eternal are the devastations of death, while man is unblest with the gospel.

The light, how glorious, then, which shines in the region of futurity. How gladdening the rays of hope, beaming on the mind's eye from beyond the dark billows of that Jordan. Hail, ye heralds of heaven, proclaiming the intelligence of the abolition of death and the redemption of men. On the wing of inspiration we are borne back to the birth of time, when light first dawned in the wide and fathomless chaos, and man emerged from nonentity, to the enjoyment of percipient, rational, active existence; and borne on the same pinions we fly forward, till time itself rests on the bosom of eternity, and men awake from the slumbers of death, immortal in their existence, and happy in their sphere, as the God whose impressions they bear. O, how transcendently glorious is the doctrine of the cross? Whose heart will not expand with rapture and gratitude, as we contemplate the glories of the risen Redeemer? The Life of the world did not see corruption, and the Prince of Peace was not left in the grave.

It was not for himself alone, he arose from the *night of existence*, bursting the bands of the universal destroyer, and triumphing over all which bears the name of death. He had no separate interest, in leading the conqueror, a captive at his car. He rises! and hell trembles, earth rejoices, and shouts of triumph, reverberate in Heaven. If he arose not, there is no resurrection of the dead, and in this life, we have our only hope! But if the HEAD arose, not all the power of earth and hades can retain his members in their dusty beds. At the sound of the last trump they will awake, and like a man rising from profound sleep, start into a new and perpetual state of being, to the enjoyment of life and immortality brought to light through the gospel, and the bliss of each individual, be a branch of the great vine of eternal life. Who then will abandon the hopes of immortality, the light of the gospel, for the fantasies of human learning, and the scintillations of philosophy? What reader will stop his ears to the songs of angels, and sullenly anticipate the eternal silence in the tomb of annihilation? If to believe in the doctrine of Christ, be a delusion, O, how glorious! Who would not prefer a fiction, that holds up a burning lamp to cheer the future world, rather than a reality, fraught with darkness—destructive of the momentary joys of the present life, and for immortal glory, presenting the awful, and, frightful substitute of a BEAMLESS ETERNITY.

But, adored be God, the gospel is not a fiction; it is not a delusion. It is based on the immutable promises of God. It reveals truth coeval with the purpose of Heaven. The herald of eternal peace was ordained above the clouds, and under the commission and seal of Omnipotence, "*proclaimed glad tidings of great joy to all people*"—"peace on earth, good will toward men."

INQUIRIES No. II.

Is not modern religion, in many cases, an excuse for immorality and unrighteousness?

In this question I do not use the word religion in the

acceptation of many; There are many religions, and more than one mentioned in the scriptures. James the apostle speaks of a true and a vain religion.—So much for preliminary. But to the question: Do not many, very many, christians excuse themselves when charged with various imperfections of character, and moral inaccuracies, by a reference to their religious feelings, or to their conversion at some prior time?—This is the naked quere, yet it is doubted whether the party concerned can understand it without some little explication. Modified it would read thus: Do not many, when fears are entertained of their safety or religious character, silence all objections, by observing that their safety is secured by their connexion with Christ; and the defects of their character supplied by his personal excellencies—infallible assurances of which they have received by the experience of a class of systematic feelings, hopes and doubts? Who can have the unblushing confidence to answer in the negative? It is even so. Now is not this making religion an excuse for laxity of morals, and indeed for all, but the most glaring abuses of our nature and the blessings of heaven? Hold! says the uninterested one, who is not deeply versed in the history of the present time, and of the two last centuries, surely this is not the existing state of society. Yes sir, the spirit of this degenerate age has authorised this *religious indulgence* as effectually as the Roman Hierarchy, did Tetzel to sell indulgences to commit all manner of sin, for pelf, in Luther's time. Now I will ask those who impose upon the public, mysticism instead of obedience to the christian commandment, whether religion is not that virtue which is acceptable to God: whether it is not principle rather than feeling, and acting from principle instead of acting from feeling. Is it not the discharge of duty to God and man, and is not happiness its reward? By what strange process of mutation, then, has it been so entirely metamorphosed, as to excuse the infraction of its own laws and to justify the marring of

its own beauty? The answer is obvious and at hand—the toleration of speculatists in religion, and the fact that the church has lived on their speculations. As long as theory and not practice, feeling and not principle are the aim, the institution of Jesus will not exert a healthful influence. Jesus says “I am the truth.”—In obeying him we must believe and obey the truth: and the freedom bestowed by the Son of God is the liberty enjoyed by its sincere votaries. That Religion that liberates mankind from the obligation of duty, is false and leads to licentiousness:—*See epistle of James.* But more of this hereafter.

The second question of this No. of our series of inquiries shall be—*Does not the popular religion of the day, in its contemplations and hopes, begin and end too much with ourselves? Does it not turn our reflections too exclusively in upon our own breasts?* But a little explanation, which we will find in the history of the fact.—When a preacher or teacher of the modern stamp rises to address a congregation of mixed character, his usual method is the following, and in some places the harangue is repeated as regularly as are the operations of a horse mill in some of the populous districts of Kentucky: He first informs his auditors that there are with man, two distinct states of existence, one temporary and the other eternal: that the first is probationary and the last fixed: that the operations of time are preparatory to the destinies of the future world. By him, heaven is painted in all its felicitous exercises and fruition, and hell in its ceaseless agonies. But here is the spirit of the system in what follows—“my hearers, one or the other of these destinies awaits you all—examine yourselves.” But what must they examine: whether they were in the faith, or obeyed the faith of the gospel? No, friendly reader, this is not what the preacher means: let us hear him—“Examine whether all of you have realised at any time the *feelings* that I am about to describe.” He then presents that system of feelings supposed by his sect to be implied in

the term conversion. And if he is no advocate for the unconditional final salvation of all the elect, he carries the matter yet further, and inquires whether they are at present the subjects of certain enthusiastic impulses and feelings resulting from receiving the dogmas of his sect. All of his hearers who are sufficiently interested, acknowledging themselves sinners, but sinners who desire salvation and ultimate entrance into glory, are led to seek recommendation to the Divine favor. The scriptures inform them, that Christ gives such recommendation to all his servants or disciples as his Father is well pleased with; but this intelligence is all in vain. Its effect is completely neutralized by what the preacher said. Christ's signature to the instrument securing them eternal life, a sincere desire, a pure or perfect love, and an uncorrupted life with the addition of an immediate submission to the pressing, positive commands of the gospel; all these together can exert no charm to dispel their fears. In the absence of the above mentioned systematic and mechanical feelings, assurance cannot dwell in their breasts. No; they are not looking to Jesus, to the scriptures nor to their conduct the index to the bias of their soul, for evidence of acceptance or recommendation: Into their dark soul their eyes are turned. Already filled with uncertainty and fear, every item of past conduct and every distracted moral or mental faculty contributes to excite them to desperation; and standing upon the brink of despair, if they cannot find in some dark chamber of their heart, something that their fond desire can trust as an evidence of the divine favor, hardness of heart and giving up all religious effort as fruitless, or mental alienation, perhaps terminating in suicide, or some other not less dreaded crime, instances of which can be produced, will be the consequence. Oh n.y soul hast thou no refuge but to retire within thyself, beneath the piercing eye of the offended Father of our spirits! Oh blessed Jesus are these the fruits of thy philanthropy? the results of thy Father's favor, that shone so brightly in thy

lowly humiliation and thy mighty exaltation for sinners! Now indulgent reader, what is your manner of accounting for these operations of modern minds. You will certainly agree to the following conclusion:—That the whole results from our systems contemplating ourselves more than Christ. Are not the following, divine directions? To look at or contemplate Christ, instead of ourselves if devotion or happiness be the object. To believe or trust in him and not in our feelings or the arm of flesh. To crucify our affections and lusts, and consequently our feelings. To walk after the spirit (or the Spirit's written directions,) and not after the flesh or the feelings of the flesh. Was it not the Spirit's office to speak of Christ and not of himself? If so, in walking in the Spirit, we shall be looking at Christ as he is exhibited in his word, and praising him as he is praised in heaven. Did not the apostles record what the Spirit spoke to them? If so, reading, believing and obeying them is serving Christ, and our knowledge of this sincere service, the only and sufficient ground of assurance.

EDITOR.

From the Millennial Harbinger.

THE VOICE OF GOD AND THE WORD OF GOD.

THE GOSPEL NOW THE WORD OF GOD.—No. I.

It is very instructive to examine, with great accuracy, the various uses and applications of important words and phrases in the sacred writings. By so doing we form an acquaintance with the language which those holy men used as they spoke by the Holy Spirit; and from such an acquaintance with their language, we obtain the same ideas which they entertained of the great objects of christian faith and hope. Words and phrases which, in the Jewish writings, were used in a more general sense, are, in the New Institution, used in an appropriated sense. Thus while the term *Christ* was generally applied to all the anointed ones in the Jewish Age, it is in the apostolic writings exclusively appropriated to the Saviour. The phrase "*the Word*"

of God," is used in a like restricted sense in the apostolic writings. From the ascension of Jesus it is appropriated to denote the glad tidings concerning Jesus. This is its current acceptation; so that out of thirty-four times which it occurs, from Pentecost to the end of the volume, it thirtytimes obviously refers to the gospel. On three occasions it is applied to the literal voice of God at the Creation and the Deluge, and once to him who is in his own person the Word of God. But what I wish to note here, is, that it is never applied to any writing or speech from the day of Pentecost, but to the gospel or proclamation of mercy to the human race. The previous writings given to the Jews are not called the word of God now, because this phrase has in it the idea of the present command and will of God.

"A word of God," or "a word of the Lord," or "a message from the Lord," are phrases which frequently occur in the Jewish scriptures, and always refer to the immediate communication made by some messenger and addressed to some particular occasion. It did not mean what was before written or spoken, but what was spoken at that particular time, and by that particular person. For example, "a word of God came to Nathan;" "a word of God came to John in the wilderness." Some particular message is always intended, implying a command with promises or with threatenings accompanying. Now this is the word which as glad tidings, says Peter has been announced to you. This is now the will of God that we should obey him whom he has commissioned.

If it were necessary to establish this by proofs and arguments, it were easy to adduce many. But I shall only add, as a very strong evidence of the justice of this discrimination, the following fact:—Multitudes who received the Jewish scriptures as containing revelations from God—the former communications and messages of God, are, by the penmen of the New Testament, said to receive the word of God only when they

obeyed the gospel. Acts iv. 31. "They spoke *the word of God* with boldness;" "*the word of God* increased in Jerusalem." viii. 14. "They heard that Samaria had received *the word of God*." xiii. 44. "The whole city came to hear *the word of God*." 46. "It was necessary that *the word of God* should have been first spoken to you Jews."

The same remarks apply to the phrase "*the word*," without any discriminating epithet, such as "*the word which God sent to Israel*"—by John. "Labor in *the word* and teaching." "If any one obey not *the word*." "They received *the word* with all readiness of mind." And so in every passage in the Epistles where there is no peculiar direction given to it from accompanying explanations.

GENERAL MEETING—5TH LORD'S DAY IN AUGUST.

The Disciples with whom I stand connected in this place, have determined to hold another large meeting, similar to that very agreeable one, we held last August. Every friend of the message of the Messiah is invited to attend. Those who assembled last year, and all others desirous of promoting the "*ancient order of things*," are especially needed, and we wish very much to see them. Legislating for God, and dictating for each other, we will let others do, if we cannot persuade them otherwise, but our's will be the pleasing employment of singing, praying, conferring and commemorating the great events of the history of redemption, together, while many will labor in the word and teaching. If Sunday should be a fair day we expect to occupy a convenient and charming grove fitted for the purpose.

The reformation is rapidly extending in our State and in Indiana, and Kentucky, yet there has been less communication than perhaps has ever been known. in the midst of similar success—a striking evidence that the word of God and the spirit of Christianity are embraced by it. Such similarity of views upon the

first comparison of them, has never been known in modern times, not even in the best disciplined sect, where the judgment of the multitude has been surrendered to the dictation of leaders. What an argument against creeds! But co-operation is now necessary. We sincerely hope that our fellow laborers, teachers, in the eastern part of this state, and our sister states, will attend with us. Indeed we wish to make our invitation general.

CIRCULAR.

The baptized Church of Christ, meeting at the head of Main-street, in Dayton.

TO ALL WHO HAVE OBTAINED LIKE PRECIOUS FAITH WITH US—

About a year since we invited you to attend with us at our meeting house, for the purpose of devotion, mutual edification, and for the cultivation of christian and brotherly acquaintance, and feeling.

That meeting was well attended, and the beneficial results thereof remain among us to this day. We alude not merely to our joyous feelings, but to the progress we then made in the knowledge of our Saviour his laws and institutions.

Thus have we been encouraged again to invite you to meet us at our meeting house on Friday the 27th day of August, at 3 o'clock, P. M. and the two following days, for the further promotion of the Gospel of our Redeemer, and attending to the Christian Institutions.

By order and in behalf of the Church.

DAVID S. BURNET, *Bishop.*

THOS. HAWLEY, } *Committee.*

F. GOSNEY, }

Attest—F. GOSNEY, *C. Clk.*

SUCCESS.

From several letters received within a few days, I learn that, besides the good appearances in Wilmington, there is a general interest excited throughout Clinton county under the labors of brethren Rains, Wilson,